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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000619

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [KPAO](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: QUELLING VIOLENT REACTIONS TO OFFENSIVE
CARTOONS

REF: A. STATE 20587

[1](#)B. ANKARA 468

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) We delivered ref A demarche to Turkish MFA Americas Deputy Director Murat Esenli February 9. We discussed GoT reactions which have, to date, urged calm and made clear that violence, even if in response to the offensive cartoons, is unacceptable (ref b). Esenli stated that the GoT would continue its efforts. FM Gul had made an attempt to bring EU officials together with OIC leaders, but the EU had, he said, apparently been reluctant to engage as a party to the conflict; Brussels seemed more inclined to bring the UN into the picture. PM Erdogan was in the process of sending letters to colleagues, but Esenli did not know to which colleagues in Europe and the region. Separately, an Egyptian embassy source reported that the Austrians had blocked any EU-OIC conference, preferring to see EU Council Secretary General Solana travel to the region first. The Austrian ambassador claimed to have no knowledge of the Turkish proposal to host such a conference beyond what appeared in the press here on February 6 and 9. The GoT believes it has a role to play in reconciling differences and trying to help others understand where indifference - including lack of knowledge of other cultures - may cause them to offend cultures living in their midst.

[1](#)2. (C) With respect to the Embassy burnings in Damascus and Beirut, we underscored that, while the overall GoT reaction to the cartoon controversy had been measured and conciliatory, clear condemnation of these specific actions has been missing and would be the right thing to do. Had the Embassies attacked been Turkish, surely the GoT would have expected statements of outrage from allies and friends. Esenli agreed, noting the PM's and FM's general condemnation of the violence. FM Gul would use this as a wake-up call as he meets with and talks to colleagues; in any contacts with neighboring countries, he will stress their obligations under the Vienna convention and point out that if they fail to protect diplomatic missions in their own countries, they will have nowhere to turn if the same thing were to happen to their Embassies. He praised the USG approach to date, including the President's statements, as setting the right tone and helping calm the situation.

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador separately took up the issue with MFA Under Secretary Tuygan. The latter noted with frustration European

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complaints about the use or non-use of the verb "condemn." The clear message Turkey had sent focused on tolerance, freedom of speech and the unacceptability of violence. This, together with relative calm in Turkey itself, should be appreciated by the Europeans. Ambassador acknowledged the

point, but urged that Turkey be clearer in supporting its
fellow allies.
WILSON